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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how deans make successful transitions to leadership positions. It focuses on six areas: the typical stages of adult development; the rites of passage of new deans; how academics are socialized into administration; the keys for successful entry into the role of dean; what beginning academic leaders need to know; and what strategies new deans employ in order to begin establishing their professional identities. The paper discusses stages of transition into the new deanship: (1) engagement (the professorial plateau); (2) separation (the ending of an era), which includes disengagement, disidentification, disenchantment and disorientation; (3) transition (the valley of despair); (4) incorporation (the new beginning); and re-engagement/renewal (the stage of success). Factors influencing dean transition include the new dean's origin, experience, gender, ethnicity, and family. The paper concludes with eight tips on transitions. (Contains 70 references.) (SM)

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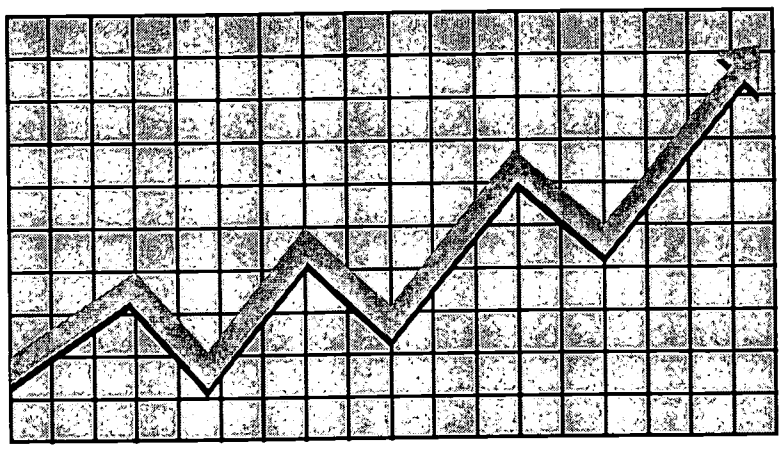
Rites of Passage:

Transition to the Deanship



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Rites of Passage: Transition to the Deanship

Deans and department chairs usually come to their positions without leadership training, without prior executive experience, without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their new roles, without recognition of the metamorphic changes that occur as one transforms from an academic to an academic leader, and without an awareness of the toll their new position may take on their academic and personal lives.

Not surprisingly, scholars and administrators alike speak about a great leadership crisis in higher education. Blue ribbon commissions and executive reports from the American Council on Education (1998), Kellogg Commission (Acker, 1999), Kellogg Foundation (1999) to the Global Consortium of Higher Education (1999) call for bolder and better college and university leadership. The search for solutions to this leadership dilemma leads us to realize that the academic leader is the least studied and most misunderstood management position in America. The transformation to academic leadership takes time, training and commitment, and not all deans and department chairs make the complete transition to academic leadership. This study addresses several questions about how deans do make a successful transition to leadership.

1. What are the typical stages of adult development?
2. What are the rites of passage of new deans?
3. How are academics socialized into administration?
4. What are the keys for successful entry into the role of dean?
5. What do beginning academic leaders need to know?
6. What strategies do new deans employ in order to begin establishing their professional identities?

The literature is silent on these questions of leadership succession, at least from the leader's perspective. This study focuses on the development

and socialization process of new deans and provides practical strategies for success.

Stages of Adult Development

What are the social and psychological stages academics pass through into administration? New deans find themselves in a adult transition paradox: life depends on growth, growth creates change, change consumes energy which is finite, and all transitions consume energy. To overlook professional transition would be to eliminate self-development.

Research on stages of personal development begins with Freud and Piaget's charting of childhood development and ends with Erik Erickson's stages of adolescence. But what about adult development and professional development? Until a couple of decades ago developmental charting stopped around age 21-- as if adults escape any further distinguishable stages of development. Three prominent life-cycle scholars, Roger Gould of UCLA, Yale psychologist Daniel Levinson, and George Vaillant of Harvard have developed theories about adult development. These theories, popularly written in Gail Sheehy's books, *Passages* (1976) and *New Passages* (1995) and professionally reported in Daniel Levinson's *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978) and Roger Gould's *Transformations* (1978), outline remarkably predictable crises of adulthood. Transition to and from each of these stages in adult life brings about change, whether it be the exhilaration of a new appointment in the academy or depression from the denial of tenure.

While there is no shortage of theory upon which to base stages of personal development in academia, considerable discrepancy exists among the theorists (Bridges, 1991). What literature clearly illuminates the unknown path professionals take as they change jobs?

Rites of Passage: A Theory of Personal Development

Traditional tribal societies place tremendous emphasis on transitions in their social culture, just as did ancient civilizations. Arnold van Gennep, a

Dutch anthropologist, first interpreted these rites for a modern, Western audience almost 85 years ago and coined the term, *rites of passage*, as a way rites were used in traditional societies to structure life transitions dealing with birth, puberty, death, selection of a chief, and creation of the shaman (van Gennep, 1960; Bridges, 1980). While appointing a new dean is not equivalent to anointing a shaman, all transitions pass through of three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. The first phase consists of separating one from the old and familiar social context and putting the person through a symbolic death experience. Next comes a time in isolation in what van Gennep called the "neutral zone," a gap between the old way of being and the new. Finally, when the intended inner changes have taken place a person is brought back and re-enters the social order on a new basis. All passage rites revealed this three-phase form. Rituals of passage are simply a way of focusing and making more visible the natural pattern of dying, chaos, and renewal. Recently, transition management writer William Bridges used van Gennep's cultural transition research to examine the three natural phases of job transitions: *endings*, the *neutral zone* and the *new beginnings* (1980; 1991).

Sociologists label this transition period from the time of appointment to a position until the time of acceptance in the organization as the *organizational socialization* period. From the many organizational socialization developmental models (Hart, 1993), a similar three-stage model emerges: (1) *anticipation*, (2) *encounter*, and (3) *adaptation*. The anticipatory socialization stage begins when one is selected for the new position and has made the decision to leave the current position as characterized by breaking off loyalties to the present position and developing new loyalties. Louis (1980) refers to this as "leave taking." The encounter stage begins when one actually starts the new position and begins to cope with the routines, surprises and relationships. Finally, the adaptation stage begins when one develops

strong trusting relationships in the academy and finds out how things work in the informal organization.

This theoretical framework has been used to study new department chairs' transition from faculty to administration (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Seedorf, 1990) and new school administrators' socialization process (Ortiz, 1982), and is the basis for the current study on academic deans. Figure 1 portrays a more complete cycle of the socialization process beginning with the *engagement* stage from which the academic launches into the dean socialization process, then moves through the three stages of socialization (using van Gennep's terms of *separation, transition* and *incorporation*), and ending with *re-engagement* or settling into the deanship.

A Dean's Rite of Passage: A Methodological Approach

In our studies of department chairs, we discovered that while many academics successfully entered the anticipatory and encounter stages, few completed the adaptation stage of academic administration. One indication is the short tenure of department chairs. At least 65% of department chairs return to faculty status and do not continue in academic administration. This led us to question whether faculty successfully socialized into academic administration. A subsequent study at the Center on Academic Leadership concluded that many department chairs had not, in fact, been successfully socialized into the department chair position (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). With this observation in mind, a team of researchers engaged in an ethnographic study of 13 new department chairs at ten public and private colleges and universities in eight states to explore the socialization process of new department chairs (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

The Center conducted a parallel series of studies of academic deans in 1996 and 1997 (1440 deans in the United States and 300 deans in Australia) which called attention to the difficulties new deans experienced as contrasted to those with two or more years experience (Gmelch & Wolverton, 1998, 1999). In addition, several reports have concluded that dean searches were

failing more often now than in the past (Anderson, 1999). Today's deans in the academy resemble an academic species with an imperiled existence (Gmelch, 1999). Edward Lawler, an organizational effectiveness scholar, comments: "Most deans now seem to fail. It is a terribly difficult balancing act."

The current ethnographic study of a dean was undertaken to investigate the organizational socialization process of a new dean and draw practical implications for institutions and individuals. The researcher began to seriously study the problems and challenges of dean transition for a very practical reason: He assumed an interim "inside" dean position in 1997 and accepted a "outside" dean position at another institution in 1998. In order to understand the stages of leadership transition and how deans adapt to their transition, this three year qualitative study of one dean was undertaken. A number of data gathering techniques were used to comprehensively investigate this period of transition: a personal daily journal of activities, beliefs and reflections kept over a three year period; a record of daily schedules documenting each day's activities; a series of semi-structured, open-ended interviews conducted by an outside researcher; and documents of the events and challenges facing the college during the period of study. As of February, 2000, the documentation included 1,345 pages of transcriptions from the personal journal; 850 days of daily schedules; 120 pages of interview transcriptions; and several archive boxes of documents. All documents are currently being examined according to established methods of qualitative research.

This methodological approach, grounded in the interpretive perspective (Morgan, 1980) advocated by MacPherson, rests on the premise that to understand the socialization process it is necessary to "understand an administrator's sense of 'being an administrator' over time in terms of what he or she does and his or her reflections on what is done" (1984, p. 60). Leadership scholars are strangely silent on the issues of leadership succession,

at least from the leader's perspective (Sorenson, 2000). The interview procedure and intensive reflective diary permitted the dean to report on his routine and nonroutine activities as well as his perspectives, beliefs, and overall sense-making (Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987).

Stages of Transition to the New Deanship

Engagement: The Professorial Plateau

Entry into the deanship starts from somewhere. Professors, like school teachers, have two options as they enter the academy. They can establish a career within their discipline or they may decide to "try their hand" at academic administration. Either of these options presents differing socialization processes for the academic (Ortiz, 1982). Those who remain in their academic endeavors change according to the requirement of their discipline. Those who opt for administration as a career may undergo severe changes (socialization) as they move into administration.

As our previous studies have shown, most academics do not enter the academy with administration in mind. Department chairs tend to be socialized in their disciplines for over 16 years before accepting a department chair position. The conventional path to becoming a dean is "professional ascension," or rising through the ranks (Morris, 1981). Kathryn Moore and her colleagues (1983) found that the large majority of deans have been faculty, and this position has constituted the principal entry portal to the dean's career trajectory. However, a strictly hierarchical linear model for the deanship is not clear. Once employed by the academy, no particular leadership or administrative experience seemed to lead to the deanship. As a matter of fact, "more deans conform to variations from the 'norms' than to the 'norms' themselves" (Moore, et al., 1983, p. 514).

While it is not evident whether deans matriculate through certain administrative ranks before reaching the deanship, most deans have had experience as department chairs (60%) prior to their deanships, less than 40%

had been associate deans, and 18% had administrative experience outside the academy (Gmelch, et al., 1996). However, the transition from the professorial plateau into the deanship is different in nature and magnitude than the initial transition from faculty into the administrative roles of department chair or associate dean. One would hypothesize that most department chairs do not strive to permeate the boundaries of administration, or seek to be totally socialized into the administrative structure of the university. The subject of this study had been a department chair on three different occasions and served twice as associate dean. His most immediate past position prior to accepting the interim deanship was associate dean and interim department chair. Since he had not been a dean, his rites of passage would include passing through the stages of separation, transition and incorporation.

Separation: The Ending of an Era

Passage to a deanship begins with letting go of something. It starts at the end of the plateau period -- ready to take a plunge, to test the water, to become an administrator. In anticipation of a position in academic leadership, faculty may seek formal preparation (professional development conferences, workshops and programs) or informal means of enlisting mentors such as GASing activities (Getting the Attention of Superiors through committee work, etc.) (Griffiths, 1966), and so on. This is vastly different from the anticipatory stage of teachers entering school administration. Two very different types of candidates seek the administrative role in elementary and secondary schools. The majority of candidates consider teaching as a transitional role, that is aspiring to be a principal prior to teaching, and the other candidates entered teaching as teachers, and later moved into administration (Blood, 1969). In contrast, professors customarily enter higher education to engage in scholarship and teach in their discipline and are socialized in their discipline for an average of 16 years (from graduate school through the professorial ranks), before considering a new role in academic administration (Carroll, 1991). Whereas

teachers must formally engage in the study of administration to become certified to administer, the Ph.D. in higher education is considered sufficient to enter academic administration.

Physically preparing to separate begins with the search process: scanning the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for openings, letting colleagues and mentors know one is considering a move, receiving a nomination call, and finally writing a letter of application. The reality check hits at the interview stage when one must visualize himself or herself in a new place and position and conducts a self-assessment of the fit and wisdom of a transition. This pre-launch period may take weeks, months, or even years before the right offer challenges the candidate to end the current position and start new. The separation stage formally starts with the act of the verbal commitment and signing of the new contract, although the anticipatory socialization may begin months and years prior to this time.

Thus, the new deanship starts with an end. As T. S. Eliot wrote ". . . to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." The separation for the new dean was filled with mixed emotions:

> *I was trying to remain cool, calm and collected while preparing for my new deanship, but deep down I was confused and feeling schizophrenic: from exhilaration at the prospect of my new position to emptiness for having to leave meaningful relationships; from a sense of new loyalty to my new colleagues to betrayal of my old colleagues; from excitement about a new position to exhaustion from all the changes needed to start the new position— buying and selling a house, making new friends, finding new confidants, adjusting to new financial arrangements -- salary, benefits, and expenditures -- all this after 18 years of social and professional stability at one institution.*

Four natural emotions emerge during this period of separation: disengagement, disidentification, disenchantment and disorientation (Bridges, 1980).

Disengagement. Traditional peoples universally believe that in times of inner transition people need to be separated from their familiar place in the social order—removed from family and sometimes forcibly taken out

into the forest or the desert. The prospective shaman leaves the village on a long trek of self-discovery. While not a shaman, the new dean finds that the new role creates a disengagement: from close faculty relationships; from scholarship as he knew it as a faculty member; from familiar departmental settings to new "distant" dean office settings; and from being a faculty colleague to being a mediator, boundary spanner and politician. Clarified, channeled and supported, the change can lead toward development and renewal. However, the dean's development is not focused, channeled and formally developed by the institution but left to random and informal self-exploration.

Disidentification. In breaking the old connections to the institution and college, the new dean loses ways of self-identification. For some new deans, it may be the loss of the faculty role that prescribed their behavior and made them readily identifiable. When you ask department chairs who they are, most respond with their faculty identity, but a greater proportion of deans reflect their administrative identify. Their identities change from primarily faculty to primarily administrator. Only 6% of the deans see themselves primarily as faculty in contrast to 52% of the department chairs (Gmelch & Wolverton, 1999). Thus, socialization into administration and away from faculty status becomes much more pronounced for deans.

In most rites of passage ceremonies remove signs of the old identity, represented by shaved heads, painted faces, masks, unusual clothing, or the abandonment of one's old name (Bridges, 1980). Some of these tribal passages are no different for new deans as they change to more formal wardrobes, act more guarded in their demeanor, and are referred to more deferentially as "the dean" as though the new title stripped them of their proper names. "In Zen training . . . when students go to the zendo or temple, they put on robes as they enter to acknowledge they have change roles from their 'outside-the-temple' role" (Sorenson, 2000, p.137). Even outside the college "temple" walls, deans seldom feel free to take their official "robes" off to attend community

events or shop in town. In essence, the separation becomes a vocational transition from predominantly faculty to dominantly administration.

Disenchantment is the discovery that in some sense the role of faculty member is no longer real for them. The disenchanted new dean recognizes that the old view was sufficient in its time, but insufficient now. Most deans studied indicated that they severely reduced their level of scholarship upon becoming a dean, and were dissatisfied with that change. Socially, faculty tend to distance themselves from the dean and perceive the new dean differently than a colleague or faculty member. New deans tend not to socialize as much with their faculty because it may be perceived as favoritism. They spend more time becoming acclimated in their new social circle of deans, central administrators and external stakeholders. As a result, new deans lose their identity as scholar and start to feel a sense of isolation from faculty colleagues.

Disorientation: Disorientation affects not only one's sense of space but time as well. In old passage rituals, the one in transition often would be taken out into unfamiliar territory beyond the bound of his or her experience (and left there for a time). The dean moves in new and unfamiliar circles, trading time spent in departmental faculty meetings for provost meetings and unfamiliar engagements with unknown external constituents.

Thus, the new deanship starts with the end of the previous position. The new dean lets go of the old before embracing the new, not just outwardly, but inwardly feeling disengaged, disenchanted, disoriented and without a sense of identity. As the term "separation" suggests, this is a time of turning away from the familiar and going into the "solitude of the forest for a time of reflection and study," (Bridges, 1980, p. 45) a period of transition.

As Oscar Wilde quipped: "The gods have two ways of dealing harshly with us—the first is to deny us our dreams, and the second is to grant them."

Transition: The Valley of Despair

The transition phase is the time between the old job and the new -- a rich time for insight and discovery. It actually begins with the anticipation of a move and continues throughout the phases of incorporation and re-engagement. Rather than a linear depiction as in Figure 1 with distinct starting and stopping points of each phase, the phases are more overlapping where one is dominant at a time but the other phases are still present as suggested in Figure 2.

Certain events or ceremonies signal the end of the separation period and the beginning of the transition to the new position. For this new dean the farewell reception brought formal closure to one position and launched him into the next phase. Testimonials and farewell speeches were given on behalf of the "departing" dean, concluded by the dean's own message of thanks that brought closure to his era at the institution and in the state. Symbolically this rite of passage occurred in June, a week before his final day, but psychologically he realized this transition phase had been occurring in concert with the separation ever since he signed the contract with the new institution four months earlier. In essence, the separation and transition occurred simultaneously. The new dean reflected:

> *I had secured my deanship by the middle of February but did not have to report until July 1, so I realized there is a tremendous amount of work that could be done in the next four and one-half months to make the transition a smooth and psychologically easy one.*

Then, three months later:

> *Here it is the middle of May with only six weeks left and I realized that it's been a very stressful and draining double bind of being both an interim and a prospective dean of two institutions 1700 miles apart at the same time. . . commuting to the new institution once a month to meet with faculty and staff.*

As he departed for his new position:

> *When we got in the car to drive 1700 miles to our new home, our hearts were heavy and chests tight. We traveled the first few hundred miles with great silence and then discovered we were suffering from*

the same symptoms. We had driven into a valley of despair not knowing where we were and when we would exit.

Finally, after arrival on campus he remarked:

I finally have a sense of exhilaration as I have been in denial over the past four months that I actually am leaving WSU and going to ISU. Part of the difficulty in that transition was not to show any less loyalty to WSU than I had in the past 18 years. The exhilaration I'm feeling now, excluding the remorse for leaving my friends, is mere exhilaration that I can now be single-minded in my focus.

William Bridges believes that the transition stage is not an important part of the adjustment process, but a temporary state of loss to be endured. It is kind of a "street-crossing" procedure as one tries not to be in the middle of the street longer than necessary. For the new dean the events of the farewell party represented times one professionally and personally steps off the curb and enters the valley of despair. The act of crossing the street to get to the other side was represented emotionally, physically and socially with the drive out of town and the 1700 mile "move." It is a time when the old way is gone and the new doesn't feel comfortable yet.

Transition can, in fact, be a source of self-renewal because after one has struggled and floundered in the separation phase, self-renewal and reflection is needed. The new dean's valley of despair as depicted in Figure 1, represents the time in the middle of the transition period when one finds ways of being alone and away from all the familiar distractions. The transitioning dean remarked on Sunday, June 28, 1998, somewhere in the middle of Montana:

Over the three day drive from "home" to our new start, I am reflecting on what we did to help cope with the tides of change -- to put an anchor to the winds of the loss of continuity with the past, ambiguity of what lies ahead.

Just as tribal elders provided tools in the form of rituals, deans in transition must fashion their own tools to help shorten their transitions today. How can the new dean cope and find meaning in this transition period?

1. *Find professional "hearth" time.* In old passage rituals people learned to solicit the aid of dream figures to cultivate mental states of heightened awareness sometimes enhanced by meditation, chanting, and psychotropic substances. Today leadership tends to be in a constant "white-water." How can transition deans reflect while in the rapids of transition? What cultural practices support reflection? Sharon Parks (1996) contends people need "hearth" time -- a place in front of a fire to sit for a few minutes to an hour -- that offers enormous stability and the motion of flickering flames for contemplation. Today's modern house seldom has a hearth or place to linger. Families used to have "table" time to talk and reflect, rather than listening to sound bites. Communities had the "commons" for discourse, such as the town plaza and Austrian-style coffee houses. Where and when is the new dean's hearth time -- while flying on planes, driving extended distances, browsing in bookstores, sharing a bagel and coffee with a friend, working at home away from interruptions?

2. *Keep a reflective journal.* Use the transition time as an opportunity to take stock and reflect. This study began as a reflection on the new deanship, where each day the transition dean dictated a summary of the activities, impressions of people and events, and reflections on the day, finishing with responses to three questions: What went well? What got in the way? What would I do differently tomorrow?

3. *Leave right -- don't evacuate.* The conditions under which one leaves significantly impacts success of the transition. A "healthy leave taking" occurs when one is looking forward to the new position but has fond memories of the past position (Alvy & Robbins, 1998). Also, leaving right means leaving the institution in the best order and providing a smooth transition for the incoming dean. Find opportunities to introduce the new dean to key constituents at campus events, transition ceremonies and conferences. Rather than just

cleaning out the desk or passing the gavel as a symbol of power, pass the baton as part of a succession relay team of deans -- in stride -- as a symbol of cooperation to the new dean for his or her next leg in the dean's relay.

4. *Take time for the transition.* A newly transitioned dean who had just moved from one deanship to another the year before suggested that our subject take a two-week period off between jobs. However, this new dean wanted to move to the other side of the street as fast as he could so he completed one contract on June 30 and started the next on July 1. In retrospect, the new dean regretted not having "down time" between positions. William Bridges suggests, "We need not feel defensive about this apparently unproductive time-out at turning points in our lives, for the neutral zone (transition) is meant to be a moratorium from the conventional activity of our everyday existence" (1980, 114). The attentive inactivity of walking, watching, traveling and dreaming in this transition period creates healthy time for reflection and preparation to enter the incorporation stage.

Incorporation: The New Beginning

A former academic administrator and renowned anthropologist once reflected: "Being a new dean is like learning to ice skate in full view of your faculty." For the first time dean it "[Life] is much like playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on" (English Poet Samuel Butler). As with learning an instrument, the incorporation or adaptation stage takes time and represents a gradual passage incorporating learning and action. The "new beginning" starts formally with the move into the dean's office, but the assimilation and success can take from a few months to years. Scholars do not agree on its duration. With public school administrators, some visible change and movement into incorporation occurred within three months of a high school principal's succession (Lamoreaux, 1990), while with others change lasted from about 18 months (Weindeling & Earley, 1987) up to

two years due to the unique structure of the traditional school year (Cosgrove, 1986). A study of 14 business management successions concluded that the process of "taking charge" can be long, taking from two to two and a half years--some even longer or not at all (Gabarro, 1985). Similarly, Forrest Parkay found that a few principals failed to achieve even basic socialization after five years (Parkay & Hall, 1992), and in higher education many department chairs entered the anticipatory and encounter stages but did not successfully adapt to their leadership positions (Seedorf, 1990). Those failing to fully socialize into their new positions remained in a mode of damage control, chaos and conflict while those who became incorporated reached a level of stability, success and routinization -- and moved on into the final stage of re-engagement or re-entry with a sense of belonging, commitment and intimacy (Pollock, 1996).

The incorporation of the new dean followed a predictable pattern similar to the corporate executives as they "took charge" of their new positions: (1) taking hold; (2) immersion; (3) reshaping; (4) consolidation; and (5) refinement (Gabarro, 1985). While the overall length of time for incorporation was similar, the stages mirrored the structure of the academic year.[1]

The new dean in this study felt "settled in" when he perceived that three conditions came together. First, he became *committed* to the institution and college, as indicated by a deep sense of pride in the university's accomplishments and new loyalty to the institution and his colleagues. Second, he gained a sense of *competence* in what he was doing. He understood the roles and responsibilities of the dean and felt he was competent in performing his duties. Finally, and only after 20 months in the position, the new dean felt *confident* and *comfortable* with his faculty, staff and students, his role in the university, his place in his profession as a dean,

[1] A companion paper characterizes each of the stages of incorporation. See "The New Dean: Taking Charge and Learning on the Job," W. H. Gmelch, AACTE Conference, February, 2000).

and his role as a leader in the academic community. At this point a sense of calmness, personal control and confidence began to come over the new dean. At any time, critical events challenging the support of the college, the financial stability of the economy, the practice of the education profession, or mission of the college may interrupt and destroy this sense of calmness. The seasoned dean responds by learning and taking action, not as a newcomer, but based on experience.

Endings and beginnings, with emptiness and valleys in between; that is the shape of the transition period in professionals' lives. In universities these times come far more frequently than one might imagine. While academics enjoy stable careers, the transition to a deanship is a transition to a new profession.

Re-engagement/Renewal: The Stage of Success.

Once the intended inner changes have taken place a person re-enters the social order on a new level of the professional plateau. Not all deans, however, successfully transcend the socialization process and resettle with a sense of re-engagement. Some have difficulty, as they may choose not to settle. Either they haven't learned or don't like their new culture. Some academics reject their new administrative roles and wish to return to faculty status. Others are afraid of being disloyal to their old colleagues or previous institution and never change their loyalties. These new deans don't leave their previous jobs well, which impacts how one enters the new position.

Factors Influencing Dean Transition

A number of factors shape how deans progress through the socialization process and impact the timing and patterns of assimilation into the new position. Important influences include the new dean's origin, experience, gender, ethnicity and family.

Inside versus Outside Dean. Many features can be used to identify characteristics of deans, but the one that receives most serious attention in education as well as the corporate world is that of selection of outside versus

inside candidates. An insider is one who emerges from within the college while an outsider transfers from another university. Other possibilities also exist (Grusky, 1969): an out-outsider, the dean who transferred from another type of organization such as the public schools or governmental agencies; and an out-insider, the one who is brought into the college from another department or college within the institution. The latter two hybrids create unique challenges for the incumbent dean as they must be socialized into the higher education culture (out-outsider) or the academic discipline (in-outsider).

With regard to inside versus outside candidate socialization, insiders take hold much more quickly than do outsiders and begin their deanship with a larger wave of action (Gabarro, 1985). However, insiders must overcome past debts and allegiances and strong preconceptions about themselves held by others and by themselves (Gmelch, 2000). The head of a dean search firm observed that one finds new energy and insight by moving to a new deanship that is not always possible staying at the same institution (Anderson, 1999). William Bridges (1980) concurs that the same self image and style hinders growth. In contrast, Stanford professors James Collins and Jerry Porras investigated the corporate myth that companies should hire outside CEO's to stimulate fundamental change. In reality they found that in seventeen hundred years of combined life spans across what they termed visionary companies, they found only four individual incidents of going outside for a CEO, and those in only two companies. Their research "dashed to bits the conventional wisdom that significant change and fresh ideas cannot come from insiders" (Collins & Porras, 1994, p. 10). Clearly, there are trade-offs either way.

Over a decade ago, the majority (58%) of newly appointed deans came from the outside (Poskozim, 1984), and today only 43% come from outside the institution (Gmelch, et al., 1996). Regarding tenure or length of service, succession theorists argue that a leader's time in office is strongly influenced

by whether the leader came from within or outside the organization (Brady & Helmlich, 1984). The "theory of organizational equilibrium," espoused by James March and Herbert Simon (1958), explains how the inside successor becomes bound to the organization. Richard Carlson's (1962) work with superintendents supports this hypothesis as he has shown that the average tenure of outside-recruited top executives is significantly less than for the inside-promoted successor.

Rookie Vs Veteran Deans. In a recent study of deans, 38% were in their first deanship (Gmelch, et al., 1996). While this study focuses on the new rookie dean, clearly the veteran dean who takes another dean position at a new institution must deal with the institutional socialization process of building an institutional knowledge base (context) and a new network of colleagues (sociality). While the content of the roles and responsibilities of the deanship may be familiar to a veteran dean, the context and sociality of the position challenges the veteran and the rookie dean alike. The new dean may emphasize personal competence more than the veteran, whose primary concern may be organizational learning and building relationships (Figure 3). In longitudinal studies of the development of managers, new managers noted that they did not have the self-confidence to aspire to general management jobs until they had acquired three kinds of competence: (1) *analytical competence*, to recognize and formulate problems to be worked on; (2) *interpersonal competence*, to build and maintain various kinds of relationships and groups; and (3) *emotional competence*, to handle the emotional demands of the managerial role itself. (Schein, 1985, p. 171). This search for competence may also be the primary challenge for new deans.

Formal Vs Informal Socialization. When a dean follows in someone's footsteps and a strong role model exists, they experience *serial* socialization. In contrast, *disjunctive* socialization occurs when no significant role model exists and the dean has to build a new role or alter an existing one (Hart, 1993). While an absence of role models allows new deans more freedom to

innovate, it also creates more ambiguity about what is expected of them. When innovation is needed, the lack of role models can be beneficial. Just as mentors can constrain creativity, role models can restrict thinking and constrain action. If change is needed in the new dean's college, then "the socialization process should minimize the possibility of allowing incumbents to form relationships with their likely successors" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 250). The new dean needs to respect the past, but not let it dictate the future.

Women and Minority Vs Men Deans. The issue of formal versus informal socialization becomes a two-edged sword as women and ethnic minority educators report significant stress in pursuit of leadership opportunities in schools (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988) and ascending up faculty ranks (Gmelch, Wilke & Lovrich, 1986). Women faculty, for example, had significantly more stress from professional identity and time constraints than men. While 35% of the education deans are women and 15% minority (Gmelch, 1999), this does not overcome the feeling that they "must negotiate their way through more ambiguity with less support than their more conventional peers, because few people like them have filled the role" (Hart, 1993, p. 457).

Shape of the Transition Stages. The dean's rite of passage starts with a separation, moves through a transition and ends with incorporation. Linear models portray leaders moving along a continuum, as in Figure 1, until they reach equilibrium. However, these stages are not separate phases or rungs of a ladder, with clear steps or boundaries. Instead they represent overlapping phases of transition, more curvilinear and overlapping in form such that the new dean is in more than one of these phases at the same time (Figure 2). The movement through the rites of passage is marked by dominance of one phase as it gives way to the next (Bridges, 1991). Many factors may influence the shape and duration of the socialization process: leadership experience; style of leadership; support from mentors, family and friends; ability to handle conflict and ambiguity; conditions in the college; working relationship

with the provost; transition time from offer to job entry; and other conditions in the context of college and content of the job. Although some factors are more critical than others, no one factor dominates. Nevertheless, if the deck is stacked against the incoming executive, the succession is doomed (Gabarro, 1985).

Tips on Transitions

None of the above influences -- inside or outside orientation, new or experienced deans, women, minority or men, or formal or informal socialization -- pre-determine the success or failure of the new dean. However, any transition, whether it be accepting a deanship inside one's own institution or going outside to a new institution requires one to manage change and can create debilitating amounts of tension and anxiety. An effective transition management program must deal with these transitions and the probable disorientation and isolation that may result. The "tips on transitions" serve to place the rites of passage in perspective and sink an anchor to the "trade" winds of the passage (Gmelch, 1982). New deans entering the rites of passage need to help themselves successfully navigate their journey by following some tips for their transition.

1. *Confide in your confidant(s).* Nurture your friendships. Having true friends with whom you can meaningfully communicate puts an anchor to the wind. It is dangerous if you leave finding a mentor to chance—those who pick you up are the fringe people who may have the wrong motive (Pollock, 1996). The new dean stated:

> *I can't emphasize enough the critical role my confidant played during my administrative years at WSU, and my new associate dean and colleague ISU provided with evening calls every night for four months prior to my arrival. Confidants must be good listeners but beware of the one who knows exactly what you ought to do.*

In dealing with the spiritual issues inherent in leadership, Parker Palmer suggests that "while the inner work is a deeply personal matter, it is not necessarily a private matter. There are ways to be together in community to help each other with that *inner work* (1990, p. 19). Leaders in transition need to confide and find comfort by reflecting with their trusted colleagues.

2. *Recognize the stages and shapes of transition.* Become familiar with the stages of the transition process and recognize the amount of energy consumed and adjustment needed with each successive stage in the transition process. Recognize several assumptions of the transformation of a dean: (a) the stages of socialization appear in a growth sequence such that one must deal with the ending before new beginnings; (b) while Figure 1 portrays the linear nature of the stages, realize that previous stages linger on into the new phases in the rite of passage (Figure 2); (c) socialization of deans typically is not formal and externally imposed on them, therefore they must manage and create it from within; (d) while the three-stage socialization process operates most of the time, it does not apply universally as the duration and intensity of the process depends on the individual, institution and external conditions; and (e) professional socialization is not a one time linear process (Figure 1) nor an overlapping series of events, but resembles a continuous mobius strip throughout one's lifetime.

3. *Consider your family and friends.* The end of the honeymoon and the empty nest syndrome reflect other relationships that go through a similar sequence of changes and adjustments along with the new dean's transition period. While new deans are going through a transition so do their families and friends. All significant others should be involved in the decision to make the transition, and in the end those staying need as much help as those who are leaving.

4. *Take care of yourself physically and socially.* Several new deans reported experiencing elevated blood pressure, reduced mental acuity due to information overload, and increased weight as symptoms in their first year of

the deanship. In addition, the endless evening and weekend obligations challenged the new dean to "get a life." Some salvation comes from booking season tickets to athletic and cultural events and blocking time for physical activities -- opportunities which abound at most colleges and universities.

5. *Use your transition for new learning* Why do academics enter their profession in the first place -- to learn. The "new beginnings" represents a tremendous opportunity to learn about the university, those who run it and those who influence it.

6. *Find reflective time.* People rise to leadership by a tendency toward extroversion, sometimes ignoring what is going inside themselves -- they operate competently and effectively in the external world, sometimes at the cost of internal awareness (Palmer, 1980). Wolgang Amadeus Mozart, the Austrian composer once reflected: "When I am . . . entirely along. . . or during the night when I cannot sleep, it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how these come I know not nor can I force them." Use this transition period as a time of self-discovery and development; to learn about one's style, motives and interests. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner believe that: "Ultimately, leadership development is a process of self-discovery. Musicians have their instruments. Engineers have their computers,. Accountants have their calculators. Leaders have themselves. They are their own instruments" (1987).

7. *Take a break between endings and beginnings.* Pace yourself and allow time for your battery to recharge. A close colleague and fellow "new dean" advises to take two weeks between jobs to reflect, relax and decompress. Realize "it is not over until it is over." One must end the past before the new may begin.

8. *Keep one foot in something comfortable.* New managers are most concerned about their competency to perform new skills in a new role. Build in some comfort zones based on previous successes in scholarship and

teaching. Teach a short-course or honors class or keep up with your scholarship by working with a team of researchers.

If the primary responsibility of deans is to create a college culture conducive to collegiality and productivity, then they must learn to recognize and cope with the stages of their own transition to leadership. This study has presented a conceptual framework for the dean's rite of passage and suggestions for managing these transitions. It is hoped that researchers can better understand leadership transition by studying deans in transition, and deans can use the social and psychological analysis to improve their own rite of passage. The need for social analysis exists for both scholars and successors. The Center on Academic Leadership continues its research in leadership succession from the dean's perspective and it is our hope that our colleagues in transition will benefit from our journey. Ultimately, the remedy rests with the new dean, as an old Buddhist philosopher once prophesied: "To know and not to use, is not yet to know."

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Figure 1

The New Dean's Rite of Passage

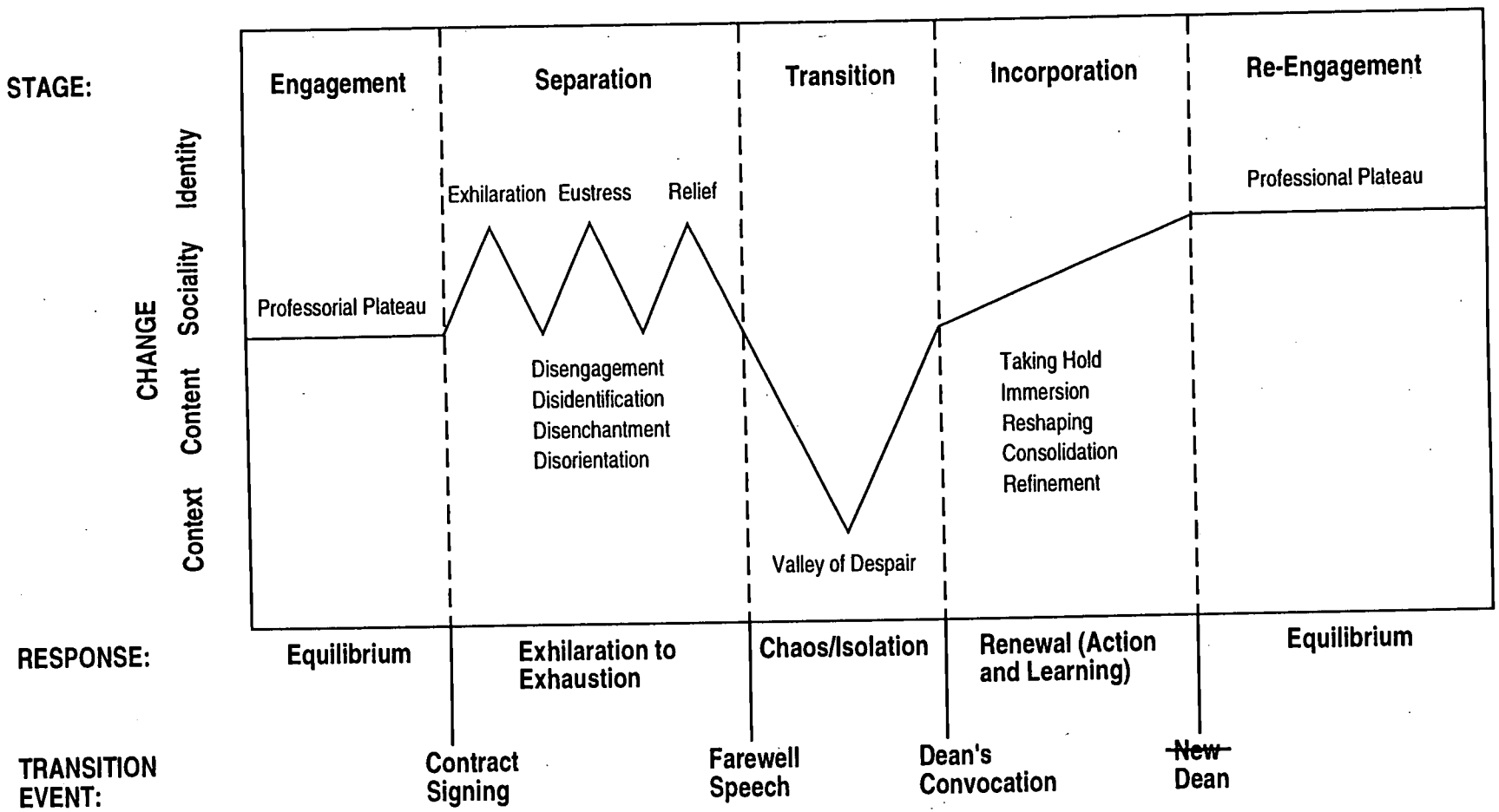

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Figure 2

Three Phases of the New Dean

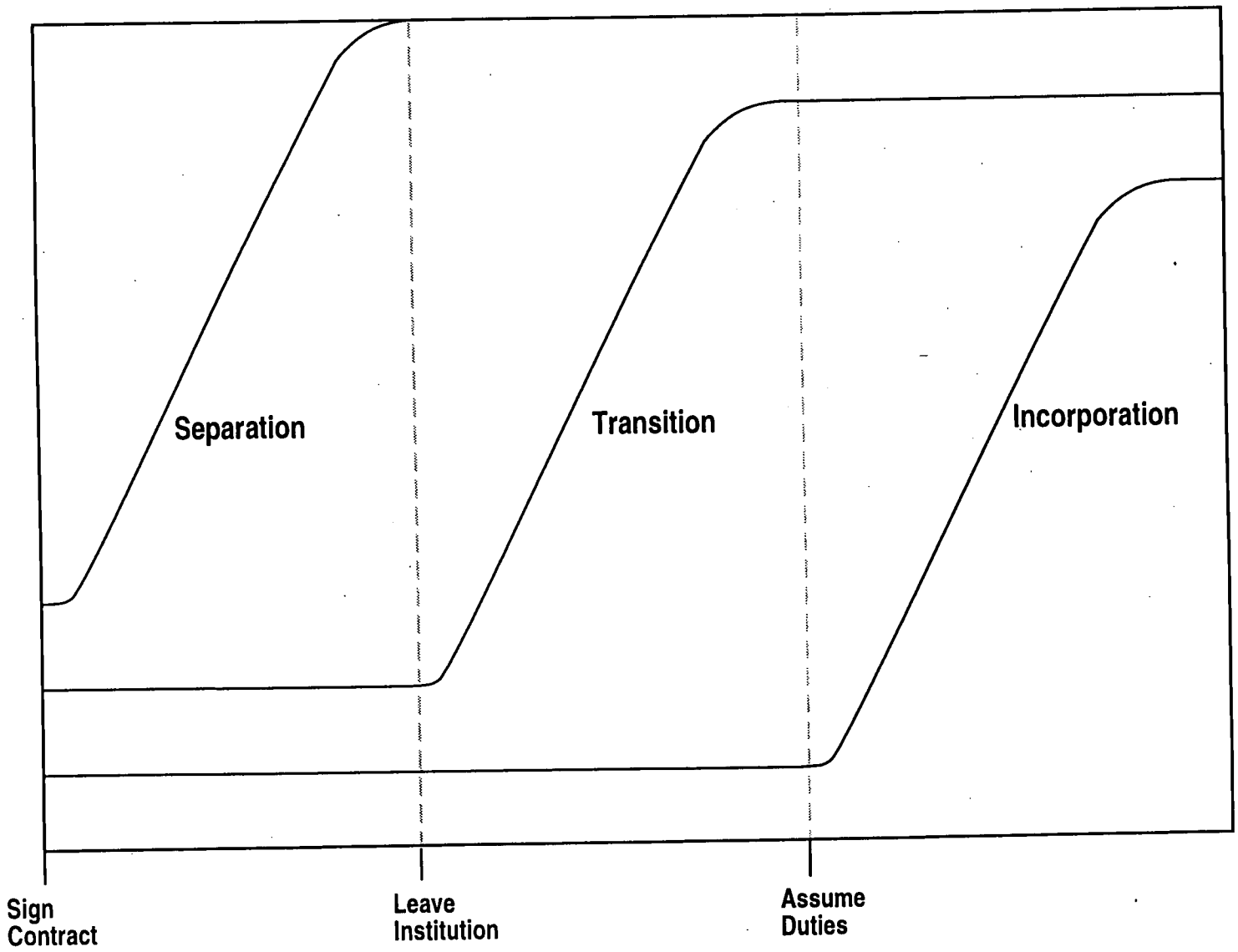
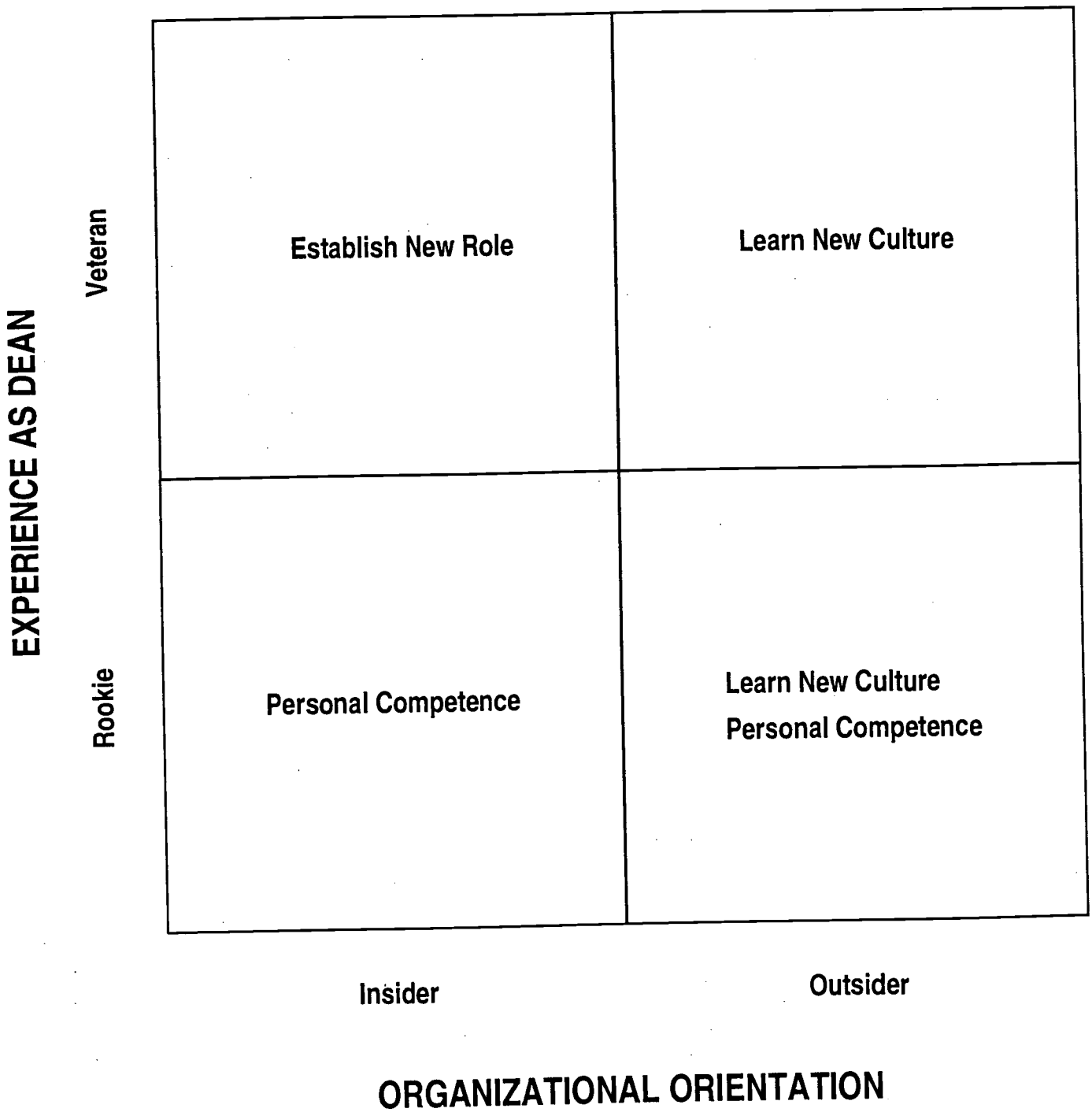


Figure 3

The New Dean's Primary Emphases



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